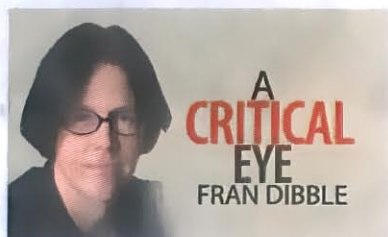


Small made big



A small gallery in Waikanae that gives a big return, botanical drawings, some used for stamps and small intricate paintings on found wooden objects are the oddly linked topics of this review.

I am picking up on threads reviewing several scattered events.

First, a brief appraisal of the Mahara Gallery, Kapiti Coast district's public gallery located in Waikanae which has increasingly gained momentum. It is an interesting place where art and community interest has flourished. It may be only 160 square metres in an unimpressive concrete building behind the shopping centre, but as a central hub it serves the Kapiti district well – not only putting on well-formed exhibitions, but with an active calendar of events. Many artists live on the Kapiti Coast. Indeed, Waikanae was once home to famous expatriate painter Frances Hodgkins, whose works will hang in an exhibition, not to be missed, during the International Arts Festival next year.

Run by the small crew of director Janet Bayly, assistant Jasmine Bailey and volunteers, it is busy with regularly changing exhibitions, good attendance at openings and numerous other activities such as lectures, the Kapiti council's arts trail and the launch of a book, which drew my attention to include it in this review.

The book of the Real Art roadshow collection was launched

last weekend at Mahara. This collection mostly travels in its own gallery in two custom-made trucks that have been visiting schools and public places over the past two years. From association it has its heart at Mahara, with the collection now also available for curated shows there every summer.

Back to town, our own public gallery has the challenge of housing many of the museum and science exhibits while renovations begin, though we are assured that there will always be two art exhibitions on display. This irritating state of affairs will probably last all of next year.

A touring exhibition on fossils takes up a huge part of space currently, which although has admirable content contains huge cases and enlarged graphics that makes for an untidy fit.

Local private galleries add interest. Taylor Jensen Fine Arts has an exhibition of botanical illustrations, a fascinatingly broad range of rhododendrons, by Susan Worthington. It is solid, clever work; Worthington has pedigree with work-time at Kew gardens, the awarding of numerous medals and her images on six New Zealand postage stamps. Clearly she is very

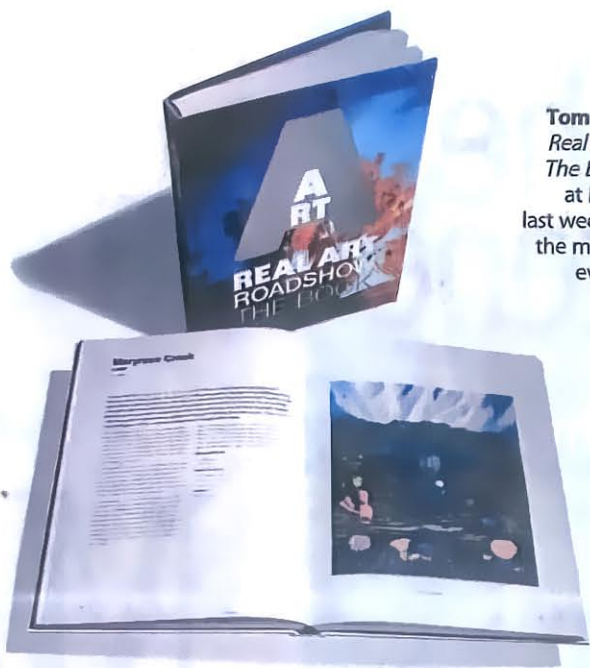
adept at the challenging task, they are beautifully rendered. As a specialised field in art, with strictness of method and rigour, it won't suit everyone's taste, the immaculate detail tending to make the flowers seem oddly lifeless.

The Idealogues, paintings on wooden shapes picked up from junk shops by Angela Lane, from Wanganui with a background in illustration, runs at Thermostat Gallery. The secondhand nature of the combined mount and surface, with their knocks and age-marks are made precious by the painted images applied. These images appear smoky and dreamlike, surreal landscapes rendered by flicks of a sable brush. They are delicately painted and deliberately feature odd fragments – a ladder in a forest, the layout of a city looking from a hill, a boat at sea. Again, art is in the smaller scale; tiny works, the smallest at only 75mm diameter.

■ *Real Art Roadshow: The Book* was launched at Mahara Gallery in Waikanae last week and is available for sale at the gallery and in bookshops.

■ *The Secret Garden*, botanical illustrations by Susan Worthington, is on at Taylor Jensen Fine Arts until November 28.

■ *The Idealogues*, new paintings by Angela Lane, is on at Thermostat Gallery until December 3.



Tome: The cover of *Real Art Roadshow: The Book*, launched at Mahara Gallery last weekend – one of the many associated events overseen by the gallery.